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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GM](#)  
SUBJECT: BREMEN'S SPD OPTS FOR A RED-GREEN COALITION

REF: A. A) HAMBURG 035  
[1](#)B. B) HAMBURG 031

[1](#)1. (U) Just a week after the state parliamentary elections, Bremen's Social Democratic Party (SPD) leadership announced on May 20 that it will seek to form a governing coalition with the Greens, bringing an end to twelve years of a Social Democratic-Christian Democratic (SPD-CDU) Grand Coalition. Jens Boehrsen (SPD) will continue as Mayor and President of the Bremen Senate (Minister President). Bremen's new governing coalition will be the first SPD-Greens coalition at the state level since the end of the Red-Green Coalition in the North Rhine-Westphalia 2005 state elections. Greens Party leadership met on May 21 and decided to enter into coalition negotiations, however Greens Deputy Caucus Leader Matthias Guelndner stated that formal negotiations will begin after the Whit Monday holiday (May 28) and should be concluded by the end of June. Both the SPD and Greens will hold party conventions on May 24 to formalize the decision.

[1](#)2. (U) Prior to the SPD's announcement, CDU State Chairperson Bernd Neumann announced that his party was planning to go into the opposition. Bremen CDU leadership will hold a specialQeting on May 22 to "set the course for a powerful role as the opposition" and redefine the party's profile in the city-state. The new Red-Green Coalition is expected to focus more on social issues, an area that plagued the Grand Coalition with several scandals over the past year.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The SPD's decision will affect the federal Grand Coalition's two-thirds majority in the Bundesrat. While Bremen only holds three seats in the Bundesrat, the federal SPD-CDU coalition requires two of them to maintain the two-thirds majority necessary for constitutional amendments. Such decisions will now require that the SPD and CDU convince one of the "neutral bloc" states in which a federal opposition party is a coalition partner to support the legislation (Ref A). Further, the May 20 announcement of the Red-Green Coalition is yet another signal that the SPD may start turning to its left flank in order to maintain its traditional voter base and appeal to new voters in future elections.

[1](#)4. (U) This message has been coordinated with Embassy Berlin.

BUTCHER